

REGULATORY PANEL: 11 MAY 2023

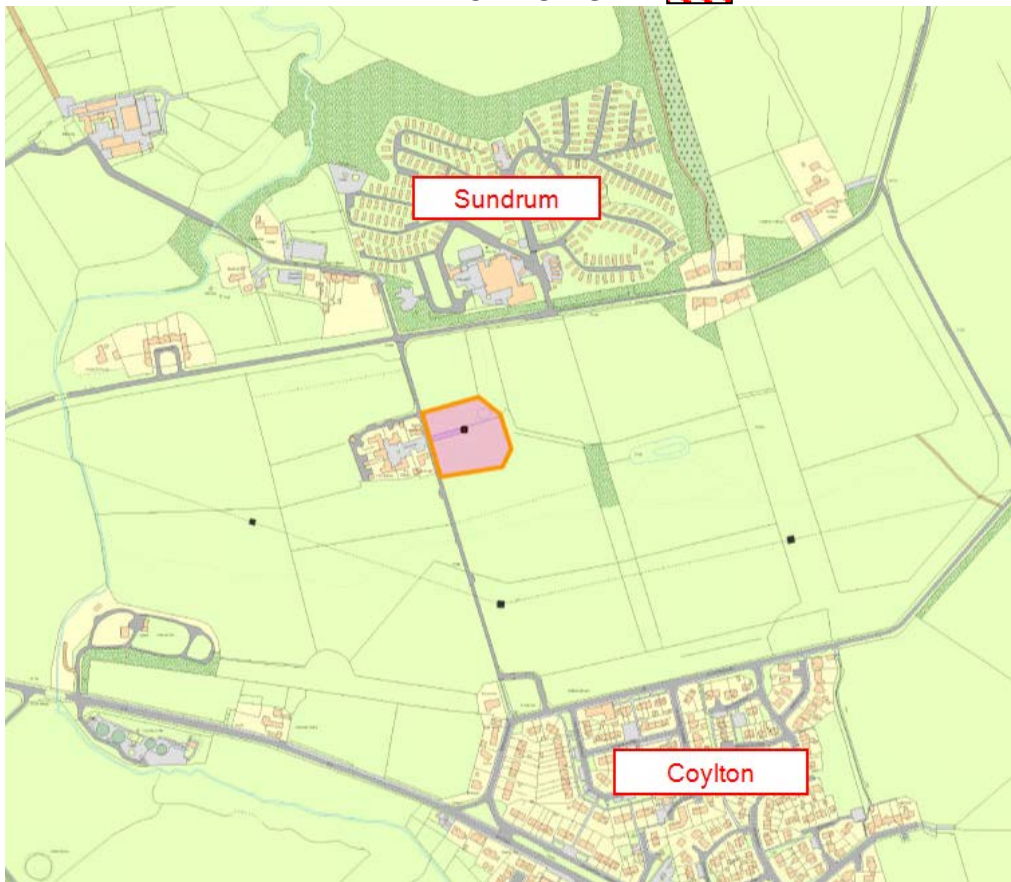
REPORT BY HOUSING, OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

22/00950/APP

LAND AT BARCLAUGH PRIVATE ROAD FROM C116 WOODHEAD ROAD TO MILNCRAIG FARM COYLTON SOUTH AYRSHIRE

Location Plan

APPLICATION SITE 



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Summary

Planning permission is sought for the erection of 3 detached dwellinghouses, with detached garages and associated works on part of a larger agricultural grazing field located to the east of the former Barclaugh Farm, to the north-west of Coylton. The site lies opposite a former agricultural steading (Barclaugh) which has already been extended to provide a total of 7 dwellinghouses, with any further development breaching the threshold limit of the Council's policies. The application site is also physically, visually and functionally separated from the former farmsteading, and there are no defining features to suggest that the application site could reasonably be described as being an infill or gap site within a cluster of properties. A contemporary design approach is proposed, and the generally two storey design and appearance of the proposed development is not in keeping with the predominant character or appearance of the former Barclaugh steading development which is located opposite the site.

The application has been assessed against the various applicable material considerations which include the combined policy provisions of the development plan comprising of National Planning Framework 4 and the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2, other policy considerations (including government guidance), planning history, representations received (17 in total) and the impact of the proposal on the amenity of the locality. The assessment considers that proposed development does not align with the provisions of National Planning Framework 4, the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan policies in relation to: Sustainable Development, Development Management, Rural Housing, Affordable Housing, Natural Environment or Land Use and Transport. The proposals do not accord with the provisions of the Council's additional policy guidance entitled Rural Housing. In addition, the

Ayrshire Roads Alliance has also recommended that the development be refused due to the proposed use of the existing access being inadequate to serve the proposed increased number of houses, and there are no proposals by the developer to upgrade the existing access. In terms of the natural environment, the submission has not provided any supporting information which considers the impact of the development on the natural environment, including any protected species which might inhabit the site. Overall, the assessment concludes that there are no material planning considerations that would out-weigh and set aside the provisions of the development plan, and related guidance and consultation responses. Given the above assessment of the proposal and having balanced the applicant's rights against the general interest, it is recommended that the application be refused.

REPORT BY HOUSING, OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

REGULATORY PANEL: 11 MAY 2023

SUBJECT:	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
APPLICATION REF:	22/00950/APP
SITE ADDRESS:	Land At Barclaugh Private Road From C116 Woodhead Road To Milncraig Farm Coylton South Ayrshire
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of 3 dwellinghouses
RECOMMENDATION:	Refusal

APPLICATION REPORT

This report fulfils the requirements of Regulation 16, Schedule 2, paragraphs 3 (c) and 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. The application is considered in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation as well as the Procedures for the Handling of Planning Applications.

1. Proposal:

The application site is set within a rural area and comprises part of a larger agricultural grazing field located to the east of the former Barclaugh Farm, which lies to the north-west of Coylton. The site extends to approximately 0.65 ha (6,500 sq metres), and comprises part of a larger area of undeveloped rough grazing land lying opposite the former Barclaugh farmstead. The site presents a frontage of approximately 80 metres onto the access road, and extends to a depth of approximately 85 metres. The topography of the site is broadly flat, and other than the existing shared access road, which is punctuated with electricity pylons, to the west, the boundaries of the site are not delineated by any physical features. Vehicular access to the site is obtained via a shared single-track road, with passing places, which extends to/ from Woodhead Road in Coylton. The aforementioned route also forms part of the core path network providing for local access.

The former steading at Barclaugh to the west of the site was redeveloped a number of years ago under an earlier application (05/00644/COU) to provide a total of 5 residential properties on the land associated with the farmhouse and its adjacent out-buildings. More recently, a further two properties were permitted and built on the land in-between the farmstead and the access road under applications (14/00542/PPP, 15/01359/APP and 17/00964/APP), which takes the number of dwellings at the former steading to a total of 7.

Planning permission is sought for the erection of 3 detached dwellinghouses, with detached garages and associated works. The submitted layout shows the houses to be positioned towards the north-western, south-western, and south-eastern boundaries of the site, with the central area being landscaped both with hard and soft landscaping. The proposed dwellings are shown to each be a combination of two storeys in height, and each with a single storey rear projecting extension. The applicant/ agent suggests the design of the proposed houses is a modern interpretation of a traditional farmhouse, with the addition of contemporary features, such as features windows, large window openings and balconies. A mixed palette of materials are proposed including; natural slate, natural stone, along with modern materials including timber cladding, standing seam metal roof, and large glazed openings. Each dwellinghouse is shown to have private garden ground and private parking accessed via the existing shared access road to the west. The north-eastern corner of the site is shown to be utilised for drainage in the form a sustainable urban drainage system. The submission proposes to utilise the existing shared

access road to service the development, with no alterations or modifications proposed, other than that which is required to form a new and enlarged access into the site. Currently the existing shared access is not only shared among the existing houses at the former Barclaugh Steading, but is also shared across all modes of transport, from pedestrian to vehicles. The associated works include; the formation of areas of hardstanding, erection of boundary walls partially along the frontage of the site, and the formation of a landscaped courtyard, and some new planting, although the submission is noted to provide limited information in respect of the aforementioned works. It is also noted from the submitted form that the applicant does not own the land forming the application site. The application is considered in this context.

The application requires to be reported to the Council's Regulatory Panel, in accordance with the Council's approved procedures for handling planning applications and Scheme of Delegation, as more than 10 competent written objections have been received from individuals.

2. Consultations:

Planning Strategy (Access) - notes that the site lies adjacent to the well-used core path network, with any proposals required to maintain local access links.

Scottish Water - no objection.

Ayrshire Roads Alliance - has confirmed that the existing access road serving an increased number of houses would require to be upgraded to adoptable standards. The ARA has noted that the submission does not propose to upgrade the existing access, and therefore conclude that due to the access arrangements not meeting the required standards of the National Roads Development Guide the proposals are recommended for refusal.

AECOM - the Council's ecological advisor has indicated that additional ecological information and surveys are required, including, as a minimum, a phase 1 habitat survey, a survey for protected mammals, and an assessment of bat roost suitability of trees and structures which could be impacted by the development, so as to enable a full consideration of the proposals on the natural environment. The application submission is not accompanied by any supporting ecological information, which considers the impact of the proposals on the natural environment.

Scottish Power - note the presence of electrical apparatus and offer no objection, in principle.

West Of Scotland Archaeology Service – has commented on the application, and has recommended a condition to ensure that that archaeological matters are appropriate dealt with.

3. Submitted Assessments/Reports:

In assessing and reporting on a Planning application the Council is required to provide details of any report or assessment submitted as set out in Regulation 16, Schedule 2, para. 4 (c) (i) to (iv) of the Development Management Regulations.

The submission is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which considers the proposals to be in accordance with the recently adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 and the related Supplementary Guidance in relation to Rural Housing, specifically, in terms of; representing an acceptable addition to an existing cluster of rural houses and the related policy criteria, and that the proposals have been designed to replicate the nearby steading development. The Design and Access Statement also considers the setting of the site, and locale, in bringing forward the development proposals.

A Drainage Assessment has also been submitted in respect of the development proposals. The assessment proposes new surface and foul water connections, and includes a sustainable urban drainage scheme. The assessment also confirms that the site is not at risk of fluvial, coastal or surface water flooding.

4. S75 Obligations:

In assessing and reporting on a Planning application the Council is required to provide a summary of the terms of any Planning obligation entered into under Section 75 of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act in relation to the grant of Planning permission for the proposed development.

None.

5. Scottish Ministers Directions:

In determining a Planning application, the Council is required to provide details of any Direction made by Scottish Ministers under Regulation 30 (Directions requiring consultation), Regulation 31 (Directions requiring information), Regulation 32 (Directions restricting the grant of Planning permission) and Regulation 33 (Directions requiring consideration of condition) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, or under Regulation 50 (that development is EIA development) of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

None.

6. Representations:

17 representation(s) have been received, 17 of which object to the proposed development. All representations can be viewed online at www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning/register.aspx. In summary, the objectors have expressed their concerns to principally relate to the following;

- The proposals being contrary to the policy provisions of the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Plan and related Rural Housing policy guidance;
- Impact on visual and residential amenity;
- Traffic and transport concerns;
- Impact on historic environment and natural environment;
- Infrastructure concerns;
- Other general concerns;

The above representations are considered more fully in section v. below.

7. Assessment:

The material considerations in the assessment of this planning application are the provisions of the development plan as formed by the combined provisions of National Planning Framework 4 (2023) and the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan (2022), other policy considerations (including government guidance), planning history of the site, representations received and the impact of the proposal on the amenity of the locality.

On 13 February 2023, Scottish Ministers published and adopted National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). NPF4 sets out the Scottish Ministers position in relation to land use planning matters and now forms part of the statutory development plan, along with the South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) (adopted August 2022).

Sections 25(1) and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) indicates that in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan. The determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The application is determined on this basis.

Legislation states that in the event of any incompatibility between a provision of NPF4 and a provision of an LDP, whichever of them is the later in date is to prevail (Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 ("the 1997 Act"); Section 24(3)). NPF4 was adopted after the adoption of LDP 2, therefore NPF4 will prevail in the event of any incompatibility.

(i) National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023):

NPF4 confirms that the purpose of planning is to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest. NPF4 also maintains a plan-led system and provides a long-term spatial strategy to 2045 based around enabling the transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability; driving inclusive economic growth; and building resilient and sustainable places, which adapt to the impacts of climate change, whilst protecting, recovering and restoring our environment. The provisions of NPF4 must, however, be read and applied as a whole, and as such, no policies should be read in isolation. The application has been considered in this context. An assessment of the proposals against the provisions of NPF4 is set out below.

The following policies of NPF4 are relevant in the assessment of the application and can be viewed in full online at National Planning Framework 4 - (www.gov.scot):

- National Policies 1 and 2 – Tackling the climate and nature crises, and Climate Mitigation and Adaptation;
- National Policies 3 and 4 – Biodiversity and Natural Places;
- National Policy 9 – Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings;
- National Policy 13 – Sustainable Transport;
- National Policies 14 and 15 – Design, Quality and Place and Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods;
- National Policy 16 – Quality Homes;
- National Policy 17 – Rural Homes;

Policy 1 gives significant weight to the global climate emergency in order to ensure that it is recognised as a priority in all plans and decisions. Policy 2 seeks to ensure that emissions from new development are minimised as far as possible. A healthy natural environment is recognised as a key to reducing emissions. Policies 3 and 4 protect, and seek to positively enhance biodiversity and natural assets, which in turn play a crucial role in carbon reduction. Further consideration of the potential impact of the development on the natural environment is set out below.

Policy 9 seeks to direct development to the right place, maximising the use of existing assets (such as brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings), and minimising additional land take (such as greenfield developments). The current application is for residential development in a greenfield site in a rural location. Specifically, Policy 9 (b) states that *“proposals on greenfield sites will not be supported unless the site has been allocated for development, or the proposal is explicitly supported by policies in the LDP”*. The application site is not allocated for development. For the reasons noted below, the proposals are not considered to align with the Rural Housing policy provisions of the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2, and the associated provisions of the related policy guidance, also entitled Rural Housing.

Policy 13 considers the issue of sustainable transport and active travel and is supportive of development in locations which support safe sustainable travel, and travel by means other than private vehicle. The application proposes to utilise the existing shared single-track access to service the development. As noted above, currently the existing shared access is not only shared among the existing houses at the former Barclaugh Steading but is also shared across all modes of transport. Following consultation with the ARA, there are concerns in relation to the road safety implications of the proposals, which propose the continued use of the existing shared access road, rather than to upgrade the existing access to an adoptable standard, as per the requirements of the ARA. Further consideration of transport matters is set out below.

Policy 14 seeks to encourage and promote the ‘Place Principle’ and the six qualities of successful places (i.e. healthy, pleasant, connected, distinctive, sustainable, and adaptable). Proposals which are poorly designed, detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area, or inconsistent with the qualities of successful places will not be supported (under criterion c). Policy 15 encourages and promotes the Place Principle as a means to create connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their needs within a reasonable distance of their home. In a plan-led system the development planning process is the mechanism to secure local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, rather than via an incremental and piecemeal basis through individual planning applications; the SALDP2 allocates the site as an area of countryside, rather than an area suitable for residential development. In this instance, the site is a greenfield site within a rural location, where there are no public facilities or services at the site, public facilities and services being located in Coylton, or beyond. However, the aforementioned characteristics of the site, along with the cumulative issues relating access and connectivity, along with the other reasons noted within this report, are considered to render the site an inappropriate location for further residential development.

Policy 16 seeks an on-site contribution of at least 25% of the total number of new homes for affordable homes. The development does not make provision for affordable housing; and this issue is considered further below.

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With specific regard to new rural homes, development proposals will be supported where the development is suitably scaled, sited and designed to be in keeping with the character of the area, and the development involves;

- i. land allocated for housing within the LDP;
- ii. reuse of brownfield land;
- iii. reuse of redundant or unused buildings;
- iv. use of a historic environment asset or enabling development to secure the future of historic environment assets;
- v. supporting the sustainable management of a viable rural business or croft, and there is an essential need for a worker (including those taking majority control of a farm business) to live permanently at or near their place of work;
- vi. a single home for the retirement succession of a viable farm holding;
- vii. subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; and
- viii. reinstatement of a former dwelling house or a one-for-one replacement of an existing permanent house.

The development proposals involve the erection of three residential dwellings, detached garages and associated development, which does not align with the aforementioned criteria (i. – viii.) for rural housing.

In addition to the above provisions of Policy 16, NPF4 states that Local Development plans should set out a tailored approach to rural housing, and reflect locally appropriate delivery approaches. The Council's SALDP2 Policy: 'Rural Housing' is supportive of the development of rural housing where the site represents an appropriate extension to an existing 'clearly defined and nucleated housing cluster'. Further consideration of the proposals against the provisions of the SALDP2, and the related provisions of the Rural Housing Policy Guidance are set out below.

For the reasons set out above, and elsewhere in this report, the proposals are not considered to align with the policy provisions of the National Planning Framework 4.

(ii) South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (SALDP2) (2022):

The following policies of the South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 are relevant in the assessment of the application and can be viewed in full online at Local Development plan 2 - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk):

- Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Strategic Policy 2: Development Management
- LDP Policy: Rural Housing
- LDP Policy Affordable Housing
- LDP Policy Natural Heritage
- LDP Policy Land Use and Transport

The provisions of the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 must, however, be read and applied as a whole, and as such, no single policy should be read in isolation. The application has been considered in this context. An assessment of the proposals against the provisions of Local Development Plan 2 is set out below.

The Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development seeks to support the principle of sustainable development by making sure that development respects, protects and where possible, enhances natural, built and cultural heritage resources. Strategic Policy 2: Development Management ensures development is in accordance with the site's land use and will be appropriate in terms of layout, scale, massing, design and materials in relation to their surroundings and surrounding land use, that the proposals do not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of nearby land uses, and are appropriate to the local area in terms of road safety, parking provision and effects on the transport network. The LDP2 Rural Housing policy is supportive of the development of rural housing where the site represents an appropriate extension to an existing 'clearly defined and nucleated housing cluster', subject to compliance with the policy guidance and criteria set out in the Council's policy guidance also entitled Rural Housing. NPF4 states that Local Development plans should set out a tailored approach to rural housing, and reflect locally appropriate delivery approaches. LDP2 policy: Rural Housing is aligned with NPF4, with the exception of circumstances where the proposed development would be on a site defined as prime Quality agricultural land (Policy 5) and as indicated on the Land Capability Classification at Scale 1:50.000. The Proposed development is not located on prime quality agricultural land.

An assessment of the proposals against the Council's Policy Guidance entitled Rural Housing is set out further in section iii. Below, along with a consideration of relevant site-specific factors.

The Council's Affordable Housing Policy seeks an on-site target contribution of 25% of the total of units from new housing developments of over 15 units or more, or a site size equal to, or more than 0.6 ha. The application site is noted to extend to 0.65 ha, however, the submission makes no provision for the provision of affordable housing. Therefore, the proposals do not align with the Council's policy in relation to affordable housing.

With regard to protected species, LDP Policy: Natural Heritage outlines that planning permission will not be granted for a development that would be likely to have an adverse effect on protected species unless it can be justified in accordance with the relevant protected species legislation. The Council's ecological advisor has indicated that additional ecological information and surveys are required, including, as a minimum, a phase 1 habitat survey, a survey for protected mammals, and an assessment of bat roost suitability of trees and structures which could be impacted by the development, so as to enable a full consideration of the proposals on the natural environment. The application submission is not accompanied by any ecological information which considers what (if any) protected species might inhabit or use the site. In the absence of any information to demonstrate otherwise, it is considered necessary and prudent to adopt a precautionary approach to the proposals, and to safeguard the setting of the site from development, and any protected species potentially contained therein. The application has been considered in this context. For the reasons noted elsewhere in this report, there are also other concerns in relation to the proposals.

Finally, the development proposal requires to be considered against the provisions of the SALDP2 policy in relation to land use and transport which recognises the inter-relationship between land use planning and transport. The Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA) has been consulted on the proposals and has confirmed that given the proposed increase in the number of residential properties, the existing access road would require to be upgraded to adoptable standards. It is noted that the application submission proposes to utilise the existing access to service the development, with no proposals within the submission to upgrade the existing access to an adoptable standard; in this context, the ARA has confirmed that the application falls below the required standards of the National Roads Development Guide. Therefore, the ARA has recommended that the application be refused.

Given the above, there are concerns in relation to the proposals, which are not considered to accord with the combined policy provisions of the development plan as set out within National Planning Framework 4 (2023) and the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan (2022).

(iii) Other Policy Considerations (including Government Guidance):

Further consideration of the proposal against the provisions of the Council's Local Development Plan and Rural Housing policy guidance entitled Rural Housing, and also site-specific aspects relating to the proposal are considered below and elsewhere in this report.

- South Ayrshire Council Planning Guidance – Rural Housing;

The Council's Rural Housing policy guidance supports proposals for new housing in the countryside, where it is an extension to an existing cluster, subject to the following criteria;

Additions to clusters will be acceptable where:

- a) the proposal is sympathetic to the character and landscape setting of the existing cluster.
- b) the development represents the sensitive in-filling of any available gap sites consolidating existing dwellings within the cluster.
- c) the development has a clear relationship with the existing cluster by being physically connected with the cluster.
- d) the proposed design solution is in keeping with the character and built form of the existing cluster and otherwise complies with design guidance in the supplementary guidance.
- e) The proposal does not expand the cluster by more than 50% of the number of houses within that group (rounded up to nearest single dwellinghouse) as at date of adoption of this supplementary guidance – 20th November 2014.

For the purposes of applying the above policy guidance, a 'cluster' is defined as a building group consisting of 2 or more houses forming a clearly identifiable 'group', with strong visual cohesion and sense of place. While it is noted that there are existing properties in the wider locality it does not automatically follow that the application site is located within a cluster as defined by the above terms, or that any further development within any existing cluster can be accommodated in line with the provisions of the supplementary guidance, and therefore individual site-specific factors, along with any other materially significant issues require to be carefully considered.

In terms of applying the above provisions of the Council's cluster policy to the current proposals it is necessary to consider the physical characteristics of the application site and its surroundings. In this instance, while the application site is noted to form part of a larger agricultural grazing field located opposite the former agricultural steading of Barclaugh Farm, the existing access road is noted to physically, visually and functionally separate the former steading, and the site of the current application. The presence of the road is considered to represent a strong and defensible boundary which represents the natural limit of development in this location. In addition, and as noted above, other than the existing shared access road to the west, the boundaries of the site are not delineated by any physical features, and as such, there are no defining features to suggest that the application site could reasonably be described as being an infill or gap site within a cluster of properties. Given the aforementioned, it is considered that the proposals, rather than consolidating the existing steading development, represent an encroachment of development into the countryside, and into a location where no development currently exists. As noted above, the site presents a frontage of approximately 80 metres onto the access road, and extends to a depth of approximately 85 metres. The proposals, if approved, would have a suburbanising effect on the countryside, through the loss of grazing land to urban development including, not only the dwellings themselves, but also the additional development in the form of detached garages, boundary walls and other boundary treatment and means of enclosure, and the formation of hardstanding to service the new dwellings. While it is noted that the applicant/ agent has sought to replicate the style of courtyard development which exists at the former Barclaugh steading opposite, it should be noted that the unlike the current application proposals, the development of the former farmsteading represented the development of previously developed land. In addition, the development at the former steading is noted to be of a higher density providing a total of 7 houses grouped in a tight and nucleated layout around a central courtyard. While the proposed development seeks to replicate a similar courtyard style of development, it is of a lower density with a different more spread out and spacious urbanised layout being proposed, which is not considered to be sympathetic to the character and landscape setting of the existing cluster, nor to make the best use of land. The application has been considered in this context, and the proposals considered to be contrary to criteria a., b., and c. as noted above.

In terms of the planning history of the steading, the former steading at Barclaugh to the west of the site was redeveloped a number of years ago under an earlier application (05/00644/COU) to provide 5 residential properties on the land associated with the farmhouse and its adjacent out-buildings. It is also noted that planning permission (in principle) was initially granted under application 14/00542/PPP for the erection of 2 dwellinghouses on the land to the east of, and in between the former steading buildings and the access road. The two dwellings permitted under application 14/00542/PPP were permitted as an extension to the cluster of existing properties. The aforementioned two dwellings were subsequently granted planning permission under later applications (15/01359/APP, and 17/00964/APP, respectively), and have now been implemented, and as such, the access road is considered as being the natural limit of development, and the obvious defensible boundary in this location. If approved, the development proposals would breach the boundary formed by the public road and extend built development into a location which is not characterised by development. As the former steading has already been the subject of recent additional dwellings, which were justified as being acceptable under the above applications and cluster policy guidance, any further development now proposed would breach the 50% limit identified under criterion e. above, and therefore, the proposals are contrary to the above policy guidance.

In considering the design of the current development, it is necessary to consider the character and setting of the properties at the steading opposite the site at Barclaugh. The farmhouse at Barclaugh steading is an existing two storey farmhouse, which as part of the redevelopment of the former steading was retained as the dominant feature of the building grouping, with the other new dwellings being lower in height and subsidiary in scale and mass as compared to the farmhouse. Consequently, the other properties developed as part of the redevelopment of the farmsteading were developed to be, and are noted to remain as a combination of single and one and a half storeys in height, with no property other than the farmhouse being taller. This approach ensured that the farmhouse remained as focal point of the steading, and that the historic development and relationship of the farmhouse to its subsidiary buildings was retained and understood. The same aforementioned approach was also applied to the two new dwellings most recently erected at the former steading under applications 15/01359/APP, and 17/00964/APP, with careful consideration and attention being had by the applicant's in terms of how their proposed new dwellinghouses could closely replicate the form, scale and massing of the other subsidiary

dwellings, whilst ensuring that the farmhouse was retained as the focal point and dominant feature of the steading. The two most recent dwellings erected at the steading, while erected later than the adjacent redeveloped steading buildings are largely not noticeably or discernibly different from the originally developed dwellings in terms of their scale, massing, design and appearance.

Under the current proposals, while it is understood that the proposed dwellings are based on the design of the existing two storey farmhouse at the former Barclaugh steading, this is at odds with the original design approach had to the redevelopment of the farmsteading, and also the approach subsequently taken by the most recent development immediately adjacent to the steading. In this context, the proposed dwellings, due to being largely 2 storeys in height, would compete with, and undermine the approach of retaining the existing two-storey farmhouse as the focal point of the steading. It is noted that the Council's design guidance expects rural dwellings to typically be no more than one and a half storeys in height, and therefore, the proposals are considered to be at odds with the design guidance as contained within the Council's Rural Housing Policy. Additionally, given the depth of the site, it is also noted that the proposed two storey dwellings would be visible over a larger area when compared to the existing and original farmhouse. Unlike the existing development, the proposed new development proposes a combination of traditional and contemporary materials, and design features, such as feature windows and upper floor balconies, however, modern materials such as a standing metal seam roof, and feature windows and elevated balconies are not characteristic of the dwellings at Barclaugh steading. Given the aforementioned concerns, the proposals are not considered to accord with criterion d. above in terms of being in keeping with the character and built form of the existing cluster or the related design guidance.

For the aforementioned reasons, it is considered that the development proposals do not meet with the Council's policy guidance and criteria in relation to additions to clusters, and therefore, there is no policy support for the development proposed.

- Planning Advice Note 72 - Housing in the Countryside (2005)

Scottish Government Planning Advice Note 72 - Housing in the Countryside is also relevant in the assessment of this application. The advice note recognises the significance of the scale and shape of Scotland's domestic rural architecture, which is derived largely from the simplicity of the form and proportion. Page 16 advises that the main objective should be to adapt the best from the local elements and to interpret traditional shapes and sizes into a modern context. The design of the development proposals is considered elsewhere in this report.

- South Ayrshire Council - Rural Design Guidance

This guidance seeks to ensure development is well accommodated within its landscape setting with minimal change to the site topography. Design should respect the character, pattern and form of existing buildings and should integrate well. A courtyard arrangement should be considered in dwellings with a footprint of over 200 sqm, traditional rural scale should be preserved and houses should generally not exceed 1 ½ storeys. The design of the development proposals is considered elsewhere in this report.

- South Ayrshire Council Planning Guidance - Open Space and Designing New Residential Developments

The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Open Space and Designing New Residential Developments' is relevant in the consideration of this application. This policy provides guidelines on plot spacing for new residential dwellings including minimum private garden sizes. This policy guidance also recommends a minimum of 9 metre depth for rear gardens. This policy also sets out expected private open space standards within new residential developments, which for detached properties extends to a minimum of 1.5 times the ground floor area and in any case, not less than, 100 square metres. While the development proposals might be capable of meeting with the above policy provisions, for the reasons noted elsewhere in this report, there are concerns in relation to the proposals.

iv. Planning History

There is no planning history associated with the application site, however, the relevant planning history associated with the former Barclaugh Steading opposite the site is noted elsewhere in this report.

v. Representations Received

It is noted that those objecting or expressing concern in relation to the development proposals are primarily the existing occupiers of the neighbouring and nearby properties. The representations received in relation to the proposal are summarised and responded to as follows.

- Proposals are contrary to the policy provisions of Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan policies: spatial strategy, strategic policies, rural housing, resulting in the erosion of green networks, loss of agricultural land, greenfield development:

An assessment of the proposals against the applicable policies of the LDP is set out above. For the reasons set out within this report, there are concerns in relation to the proposals which are not considered to accord with the policy provisions of the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan.

- Proposals are contrary to the provisions of the Rural Housing Policy - due to not being part of a clearly defined and nucleated group of four or more houses, being outwith the existing steading and separated by the access road which is the limit of the existing building grouping, not representing a gap site, not being an addition to a small settlement, being of a different and uncharacteristic type of development compared to the nucleated form of development at former steading resulting in urban sprawl and suburbanisation of the countryside:

An assessment of the proposals against the applicable policies of the Council's additional policy guidance is set out above. For the reasons set out within this report, there are concerns in relation to the proposals which are not considered to accord with the policy provisions of the Council's Rural Housing policy guidance.

- Impact on residential amenity - potential overlooking of adjacent properties and garden ground from the proposed balconies, and noise and light pollution:

It is noted that the proposals incorporate upper floor balconies situated in proximity of the existing residential properties, which are not typical of the existing properties, or the traditional design approach recommended in the Rural Housing design guidance. The proposed balconies meet with the Council's guidelines in terms of being located a minimum of 18 metres from nearby properties, and are noted to be separated by intervening public land i.e. the access road which affords views of adjacent land and property. Notwithstanding, given the nature and purpose of a balcony, it is noted that distant viewing of nearby properties would potentially still occur although this would largely be dependent on external factors such as, the weather and the occupants of the dwellings, and therefore any potential overlooking would be on an intermittent and occasional basis, rather than being a constant nuisance. Therefore, any potential overlooking which could occur is not considered to be so injurious as to warrant a recommendation for refusal in its own right, however, for the reasons noted elsewhere in this report, there are concerns in relation to the proposals. With regards to light and noise, it is expected that there would be additional noise and light associated with the provision of additional houses in the locale, however, there is nothing to suggest that the level of additional noise or light would be over and about that associated with normal domestic properties, and therefore, these issues in their own right are not considered to warrant a refusal of planning permission. Notwithstanding, for the reasons noted elsewhere in this report, there are concerns in relation to the proposals.

- Impact on visual amenity - dwellings are too tall, in excess of one and a half storeys, are not subservient to the original farmhouse and are not therefore part of the former Barclaugh steading development, the proposed balconies are also at odds with the current development, development style and appearance is out of keeping with the existing courtyard development:

The impact of the development on the visual amenity of the locale, including a comparison of the proposed development to the existing buildings at the former Barclaugh steading is set out elsewhere in this report.

- Traffic and transport matters - road safety and pedestrian safety concerns arising from increase traffic in locale, existing access road is a core path and is poor and narrow with no pavement/ verge and passing places only, the road would require to be upgraded to service the number of houses under the resultant development, access at Woodhead Road junction is considered dangerous:

The Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA) has been consulted on the proposals and has confirmed that given the proposed increase in the number of residential properties, the existing access road would require to be upgraded to adoptable standards. It is noted that the application submission proposes to utilise the existing shared access to service the development, with no proposals within the submission to upgrade the existing access to an adoptable standard; in this context, the ARA has confirmed that the application falls below the required standards of the National Roads Development Guide. Therefore, the ARA has recommended that the application be refused. Where development proposals do not meet with the requirements of the ARA and/ or the National Roads Development Guide, there would likely be potential implications for road and/or pedestrian safety, and the safety of other road users were an application to be approved against the recommendation of the ARA and without the necessary improvements taking place in advance. The applicant/ agent has been made aware of the concerns of the ARA. It is understood that the core paths and local path networks within the wider Sundrum area are very popular with a variety of users, such as, walkers, dog walkers, horse riders and cyclists, and it is understood that the access route serving the current steading is one of the main routes into the Sundrum area, which affords links to the other routes. Any development proposals approved would need to ensure safety of the route for all users, and the continuation of unfettered local access links.

- Impact on historic environment – adverse impact on the setting of the Sundrum Castle and surrounding landscape:

The application site lies over a kilometre to the south-west of Sundrum Castle, and approximately half a kilometre from Sundrum Mains which are the only listed buildings within a 1 km radius. Given the separation distance to Sundrum Castle, and Sundrum Mains it is not considered that the proposals would have an adverse impact on the aforementioned listed buildings or their settings. Should planning permission be granted for the proposals, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service has recommended an appropriate planning condition be attached to any permission to ensure that archaeological matters are appropriately dealt with. The impact of the development in the immediate locale of the landscape surrounding the steading is considered elsewhere in this report.

- Impact on natural environment and biodiversity – loss of wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors, possible loss of ancient woodland, lack of information regarding protected species within the site:

As noted above, the application site comprises part of a larger agricultural field which is characterised as rough grazing land. There is no ancient woodland within or adjacent to the site. As noted above, the Council's ecological advisor has indicated that additional ecological information and surveys are required, including, as a minimum, a phase 1 habitat survey, a survey for protected mammals, and an assessment of bat roost suitability of trees and structures which could be impacted by the development, so as to enable a full consideration of the proposals on the natural environment. The application submission is not accompanied by any ecological information which considers what (if any) protected species might inhabit or use the site. In the absence of any information to demonstrate otherwise, it is considered necessary and prudent to adopt a precautionary approach to the proposals, and to safeguard the setting of the site from development, and any protected species potentially contained therein. The applicant/ agent has been made aware of the advice of the Council's ecological advisor. The application has been considered in this context.

- Infrastructure concerns - increased potential surface water flooding in locale:

A Drainage Assessment confirms that the site is not at risk of fluvial, coastal or surface water flooding. The submission is accompanied by proposals to service the development with mains water and foul sewerage connections to meet the relevant technical specifications. Notwithstanding, there are concerns in relation to the proposals for the reasons noted within this report.

- Other general concerns - lack of economic or other benefit to the community, disruption during construction, lack of indication as to if/ how costs to use existing facilities will be shared:

The proposals are not required to demonstrate an economic benefit, or benefit to the community. The purpose of the planning application is to consider the resultant development, with any disruption during construction considered to be of a temporary nature only. The proposed use of existing shared facilities is a separate legal matter for the applicant to address in conjunction with existing owner(s) of the shared facilities, rather than a matter for the planning authority. Notwithstanding the above matters, there are concerns in relation to the proposals for the reasons noted within this report.

vi. Impact on the Amenity of the Locality:

For the reasons noted elsewhere in this report there are concerns in relation to the proposals. It is considered that the proposals, if approved would have an inappropriate suburbanising effect countryside at this location, and would the result in a form and design of development in the rural area which is inappropriate, unsympathetic and incongruous and does not relate to the character of the nearby steading development at the former Barclaugh Farm. The proposals also have potential to be detrimental to road and/or pedestrian safety, and the safety of other road users due to the access not being upgraded to meet the requirements of the Ayrshire Roads Alliance. Finally, the submission has not provided any supporting information which considers the impact of the development on the natural environment, including any protected species which might inhabit the site.

8. Conclusion:

For the reasons noted above, there are policy concerns in relation to the proposal, and the principle of the erection of residential development in this location, is not considered to meet with the above noted provisions of National Planning Framework 4, the Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan policies in relation to: Sustainable Development, Development Management, Rural Housing or Affordable Housing, Natural Environment or Land Use and Transport. The proposals do not accord with the provisions of the Council's additional policy guidance entitled Rural Housing.

An assessment of the development proposal is set out in this report, and as already noted, there are policy objections to the proposal which lead to the conclusion that the development is contrary to the provisions the Development Plan, and that there are no material planning considerations that would out-weigh these provisions. There are also concerns from consultees that the proposals have the potential to be detrimental to road and/or pedestrian safety, and the safety of other road users, and also in terms of the potential impact of the development on the natural environment, including any protected species which might inhabit the site. It should also be noted that, the purpose of planning (as set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and reiterated in National Planning Framework 4) is to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest, however, the proposed development is not considered to be in the long-term public interest. Given the above assessment and having balanced the applicants' rights against the general interest, it is recommended that the application be refused, for the reasons below.

9. Recommendation:

It is recommended that the application is refused for the following reasons;

1. That the development proposal is contrary to National Planning Framework 4 policy 9, due to constituting greenfield development, and in relation to rural housing (policy 17 criteria i. – viii.) and due to not being suitably scaled, sited, and designed so as to be in keeping with the character of the rural area.
2. That the development proposal is contrary to National Planning Framework 4 policies 14, 15, and 16 due to being detrimental to the visual amenity of the locale, and given the rural location of the site outwith a settlement, there a lack of services at the site, which is accessible by a shared single track access road which does not contribute towards a sustainable liveable place. Additionally, the development makes no provision for affordable housing, and the proposals do not provide for safe sustainable travel of all types.
3. That the development proposal is contrary to the South Ayrshire Local Development Plan Policies in relation to Sustainable Development, Development Management, Rural Housing and Affordable Housing, by virtue of the proposals not being in being located within a cluster of residential properties, which results in the urbanisation of the countryside and the design of the development not being in keeping of sympathetic with the character of the locale. Additionally, the proposals make no provision for affordable housing and have an adverse impact on road safety at the locale and no justification has been provided for a departure from the aforementioned policies.

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4. That the development proposal is contrary to the South Ayrshire Local Development Plan policy in relation to natural heritage due to the potential for protected species to inhabit the site, and no information or justification has been provided for a departure from this policy.
5. That the development proposal is contrary to the Council's planning guidance entitled Rural Housing, in that the development; is not sympathetic to the character and landscape setting of the locale, does not represent the sensitive in-filling of any available gap sites which consolidating existing dwellings, is physically, visually and functionally separate from the nearby development, is of a design which is not in keeping with the character, and built form of the nearby development, and does not accord with the Council's design guidance, and exceeds 50% of the existing building grouping as at the date of adoption of the policy (20th November 2014), and no justification has been provided for a departure from this policy guidance.
6. That the development proposal shall be prejudicial to road and pedestrian safety at this location due to the existing shared single track access arrangement not meeting the requirements of the National Roads Development Guide as specified by the Ayrshire Roads Alliance.

9.1 Reasons:

See above.

9.2 Advisory Notes:

N/A

9.3 List of Determined Plans:

- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)001
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)002
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)003
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)100
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)101
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)102
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)103
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)104
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)105
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)200
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)201
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)202
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)203
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)204
- Drawing - Reference No (or Description): AL(00)205

9.4 Reason for Decision (where approved):

N/A

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Background Papers:

1. Planning application form, plans and supporting information (available online)
2. Adopted South Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (available online)
3. National Planning Policy Framework 4 (available online)
4. South Ayrshire Council Planning Guidance – Rural Housing and Open Space and Designing New Residential Developments (available online)
5. Planning Advice Note 72 - Housing in the Countryside (2005)
6. Representations (available online)
7. Planning application history

Equalities Impact Assessment:

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the proposed development is not considered to give rise to any differential impacts on those with protected characteristics.

Person to Contact:

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